

THE CONFERENCE—AN IMPRESSION AND A MEMORY.

There are some events that remain ever fresh in the memory—some days that stand out in our minds as very special days—some holidays that more than others refresh the soul; and I think that we, who were privileged to be at this Conference, who were permitted once more to come into touch with our Alma Mater and to receive the inspiration which she invariably gives all who seek it, will treasure the memory of this Conference week in our hearts as a very precious possession.

We arrived in dribblets on Saturday and in batches on Monday, and rejoiced in the beautiful, familiar, yet ever-changing, Lake Country scenery. We had not forgotten it, yet its beauty filled us with fresh and almost unexpected delight; it took our breath away, just at first, after the flat expanses of the South, where many of us live. On Tuesday morning Ambleside was alive to the fact that we had arrived and meant business, and it watched us with a friendly interest as we found our way up to the class-room at Scale How for the opening of the discussions at nine o'clock.

To meet another student is always a pleasure: there is a common background; there are common experiences and common interests. How much, then, is this joy increased when one meets not one but nearly one hundred students: nearly sixty who have been away sowing the seed up and down the country; who have their times of difficulties as well as their times of success, who have been developing and maturing and learning many lessons which only time and experience can teach. To meet again, to exchange ideas, to compare notes, to strengthen old ties of friendship, to make new ones, to give of one's best, to receive the same from others, to return to work re-vitalised and re-enthused,

to realise that we belong to each other, that we are sisters in the larger relationship of unity of aim and purpose, are not these the gifts which the spirit of the Conference bestowed on those who sought it?

You, who were not with us in body, were perhaps with us in spirit as we renewed old memories and discussed new problems. Perhaps you were with us in spirit as we assembled in the evenings at Scale How for three delightful social functions with the present students: an At Home on Thursday, a most excellent Junior Entertainment on Friday, and a Fancy Dress Dance on Saturday, ending up, as every House of Education student knows, with "Auld Lang Syne." And perhaps you remembered us on Sunday as we, by Miss Mason's gracious invitation, met together for the early dinner in the well-known dining-hall. You can follow us as we strolled along the terrace on that sunny afternoon in twos and threes; as we found our way along the passages later on to meet in parties for bedroom teas; how the same old smells of "meth" assailed our nostrils and the same old deceptive arrangements of screens met our eyes; and you can follow us as we filed into the drawing-room later, and sat once more at the feet of her to whom we owe more than we shall ever be able to realise. It was a beautiful Sunday—beautiful in every sense of the word—and when we once more and for the last time met together at Scale How for evening prayers at nine o'clock, we felt it was a fitting ending to such a day.

Then the house resounded with the one word "Good-bye," for some were going with the seven o'clock coach next morning, and most of us were following with the eight o'clock; and so "Good-bye," "Good-bye," "Good-bye," "For two years," "Till next Conference," "Good-bye," and so it echoed till it gradually died away through the still garden and out down the lane.

It was over—the time to which we had for so long been looking forward. The laughter, the merriment, the pleasant intercourse and good fellowship was over, in one sense;

but in the truest sense it had only just begun: it was an impulse and an inspiration the fulness of which time only can reveal. And interwoven with the memory of sunny days and happy faces is the golden thread of fresh resolve and strenuous endeavour, a thread which runs through the pattern of every life that is giving anything to the world which shines with peculiar lustre after a Conference.

E. A. S.

BOOK NOTE.

"The Great Victorian Age," by M. B. Synge, seems an excellent addition to Class III. work.